

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) introduced the *Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Medicine Enhancement Act*

. This legislation will develop affordable and well-qualified opportunities for individuals who are seeking to become wildlife and zoo veterinarians, spur job growth, and promote robust public health policy.

(Please find attached a copy of the legislation)

“Wildlife and zoo veterinarians are the primary source of essential health care for, and management of, wild animals in their natural habitat and in captivity. Not only do they preserve natural resources and animal lives, but they help protect human health by preventing, detecting, and responding to exotic and dangerous diseases,” said Hastings.

In spite of a growing threat to public health posed by emerging infectious diseases as well as higher risks of large-scale outbreaks, the United States continues to face a shortage of positions for wildlife and zoo veterinarians. This shortage, combined with lower salaries, high educational debt, and insufficient numbers of practical training and formal educational programs specializing in wildlife and zoo veterinary medicine, has dissuaded students from studying and practicing wildlife and zoo veterinary medicine.

“My bill will create new positions for wildlife and zoo veterinarians and limit the amount of educational debt for students while providing incentives to study and practice wildlife and zoo veterinary medicine. My legislation will also advance education by helping schools develop pilot curricula specializing in wildlife and zoo veterinary medicine and by expanding the number of practical training programs available to students,” added Hastings.

“We applaud the leadership and vision of Congressman Hastings for introducing this meaningful legislation which enhances the highly skilled wildlife and zoo veterinary workforce and also creates additional green jobs critically needed at this time,” said John F. Calvelli, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs, Wildlife Conservation Society.

“The American Veterinary Medical Association commends Congressman Hastings and his staff for championing legislation that could revolutionize the practice of wildlife and zoological medicine. The *Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Medicine Enhancement Act of 2010* insures that our country will have a sufficient number of veterinarians trained to deal with zoo and

wildlife populations,” further noted Mark T. Lutschaunig, Director of the Governmental Relations Division, American Veterinary Medical Association.

Joining Hastings as original co-sponsors of the legislation include: Representatives Donna Christensen, Raul Grijalva, Madeleine Bordallo and Henry Brown Jr.

Endorsing organizations: the Wildlife Conservation Society, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Wildlife Veterinarians, the National Association of Federal Veterinarians, and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings is Vice Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, a senior member of the House Rules Committee, and Co-Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission.

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 [Wildlife and Zoological Veterinary Medicine Enhancement Act of 2010.doc.pdf](#)